Preserving Jewish Heritage in Texas Established 1980

Jexas Jewish Historical Society

Summer 1998

Newsletter

Dear Friends,

With the arrival of this newsletter, we introduce a new administration and a new communications team. You will find a list of the officers and board members in this issue. Jack Gerrick will continue as editor of our newsletter, Geri Gregory is now our design,

typesetting and layout director and Walter Fein our proof reader. Learn more about them in this newsletter. Your articles, comments and suggestions are always welcome and should be sent to Jack Gerrick.

The Annual Gathering in San Antonio was a tremendous success. We heard interesting speakers and enjoyed a wonderful Friday Night Shabbat dinner and Services at Agudas Achim. The lovely hospitality suite at the hotel gave us a chance to visit and "nosh." We shared an elegant dinner on the patio of the

institute of Texan Cultures followed by the long-awaited opening of the new Jewish Exhibit Area at the Institute. Please read Walter Fein's article about the Gathering for more details.

A trip to San Antonio with a visit to the Institute of Texan Cultures will fill you with pride when you see our beautiful, interesting, and extremely visible new exhibit. Within this newsletter we have listed the major donors whose financial support made it possible for the institute to renovate our exhibit area.

Our retiring president Barbara Rosenberg was completely surprised to receive the first Past President's Pin, given to her at our General Membership meeting at the Gathering, as she stepped down from her presidency of three years. Board member Nell Hall's motion, to present every past president with a pin, was passed unanimously by the membership.

Now it is time to think about and plan

meeting is earmarked for that purpose. We will meet at the Hilton Hotel at Hobby Airport on Sunday August 2, 1998 from 10:00 A.M.- 3:00 P.M. for a Board Orientation, meeting, and brainstorming session. Board members received a registration form, but all members are welcome

future projects and events. The summer board

to attend. Please contact Beverly Beck, 5302 Grape Street, Houston (713) 667-4065 by July 21st to make a reservation for lunch and let us know you are attending.

Our fall Board meeting will be held the weekend of October 30, 31, and Nov. 1 at the Stagecoach Inn at Salado. If you have not experience this lovely Texas treasure you are in for a treat! For those of us who have been there before, we can hardly wait to return... and taste those incredible hush puppies.

The winter board meeting is unplanned and I am open to all suggestions.

Next spring our 20th Annual Gathering will be held in Fort Worth. Co-Chairs Fay Brachman and Jack Gerrick have great plans for this meeting.

On behalf of the TJHS, I would like to express our most heartfelt condolences to Fay and Leon Brachman and their entire family, on the tragic death of their daughter, Ellen. We hope the beautiful memories of her life and the love of family and friends have brought them comfort.

Thank you for giving this "naturalized Texan" the opportunity to serve as President of the TJHS. I look forward to working with you in our joint efforts to preserve the interesting history of the Jews of Texas.

Warm Regards,

Jelen Welk

Helen Wilk, TJHS President



Reflections on the San Antonio Gathering

What a great weekend! Seems everybody (or almost everybody) had a great time, judging from how many people stopped by to express their pleasure. Attendance was great, almost 100 members attended the entire weekend, more than 130 were at the Saturday night dinner, and well over 200 came to the opening at the Institute - more about that later.

A few glitches – I suppose

unavoidable – a hot, un-airconditioned bus Friday evening (to those of you who had to suffer the heat, my apology; you might like to know the bus people gave us credit for that trip), too small

and too warm meeting room Saturday morning (the hotel changed that later), the breakfasts were not too well handled by the hotel, anything else?

What a nice visit to Congregation Agudas Achim Friday night. A delicious dinner, followed by inspiring services. How about that terrific volunteer choir? And the big surprise

to all of us, the performance by a dance troupe visiting here from Mexico fantastic. There was also the interesting history of Agudas, as told by Hy Marcus.

There were four informative presentations Saturday. Lenore Karp of the San Antonio Public Library spoke

on early Jews in this area, Hollace Weiner spoke about Rabbi Ephraim Frisch, and Kay Goldman spoke about by Co-Chair Walter Fein



Jewish women - these were followed by lunch (hope you liked the pineapple boats filled with chicken salad)

> and then the interesting talk by Suzanne Campbell. By the way, we need to recognize and thank Hermina Davidson, who planned and organized all the meals during

the weekend.

Many thanks also to Glenda Alter for her terrific handling of registration, both before and during the meeting.

Since lots of folks had asked for free time, nothing was planned for the afternoon, which brings me

> to one of *Director of* accepted features of this gathering:

THE HOSPI-TALITY SUITE, planned and staffed by Hortie Fein proved to be very popular - a great place to meet, visit, nosh (goodies made by San Antonio member Betty

Lifshutz), to look at Blanche Sheiness' materials on TJHS, and just generally

to "hang out." What a great and cozy place for Rabbi Jimmy's enlightening study session Saturday morning! But without doubt, the highlight of the gathering was the opening of the completely reworked Jewish Texans exhibit at the Institute of Texan Cultures. A great deal of excitement was felt by the tremendous crowd that turned

out for the evening. Speeches and a musical program by folk singer Janice Rubin were only an introduction to the tremendous surge of people into the new (and much larger) exhibit - with many expressions of wonderment and pleasure at what the folks at the Institute had achieved. Rabbi Jimmy Kessler, founding President of TJHS, had the honor of "cutting the ribbon." If you weren't there, I suggest you make a point of visiting San Antonio



Newly elected TJHS President, Helen Wilk, with Dr. Rex Ball, Executive Director of the Institute.

great new showcase of the "Jewish Experience in Texas." All in all, it

was a great gathering, and I personally am proud and happy to have had a hand in the planning, and I thank you for

giving me that opportunity.



We had a wonderful turnout for the grand opening!



From left: Walter Fein, Co-chair, with Mickey

(treasurer) and Noel Graubart of Houston.

News From the Institute of Texan Cultures

The new "Jewish Texans" exhibit (also known as SHALOM Y'ALL) has now been open for over a month, and visitation has been brisk.

However, many of the floor docents (guides) have been somewhat reluctant to take groups into the exhibit because of their very limited knowledge of the subject.

In order to alleviate this reluctance, a training course for floor guides was held each day during the first week of June, during the noon hour.

Laurie Gudzikowsky, the assistant program director for ITC, and driving force behind the project for the past three years, (each) gave an introduction to the history of the exhibit, and then the docents were taken to the floor for talks by Jim Cosgrove, designer of the exhibit, and Walter Fein, long-time docent, active in the planning and development of the exhibit. Many terms were clarified, strange words and concepts explained, and many, many questions were answered. Hopefully, the total of 55 persons who took the training are now better prepared to present the area to visitors.

P.S. Those of you who know Walter Fein will be interested to hear that he was honored with the Director's award of excellence at the recent annual volunteer awards dinner. The award was given in recognition of his work at the Institute book store, as well as his involvement in the updating and complete reworking of the Jewish exhibit.

Major Donors of the ITC Exhibit

This exhibit was made poss	sible through the generosity of:		
The Texas Jewis	h Historical Society		
The Eleanor and Fi	rank Freed Foundation		
	za Kempner Fund		
	an Antonio Endowment Fund sh Federation of Greater Dallas		
The Endowment Fund of the			
and Its Component Funds, The Samuels Foundation			
Ann Berger We			
A Donation in Loving Me	mory of Ben and Julie Rogers		
	es on the Jewish-Texan experience.		
Shalom Y all: The Jewish Experience in Texa	as draws from one of the best and most recent.		

The Jewish Historical Society The Eleanor and Frank Freed Foundation Harris and Elza Kempuer Fund The Jewish Federation of San Antonio Endowment Fund The Foundation of the Jewish Federation of Greater Dallas The Endowment Fund of the Jewish Community of Houston and its component funds The Samuel Foundation Mickey and Noel Graubart Philanthropic Fund Ann Berger Wolens Foundation A Donation in Loving Memory of Ben and Julie Rogers The Feldman Foundation

The above plaque is on display at the Institute of Texas Cultures Jewish Exhibit.

Letter from the Editor

Our president, Helen Wilk, has asked me to take over as editor of the THJS Newsletter for another year (2nd), which I have accepted. I feel that over the past years, our newsletters have been the envy of the nation, as far as historical newsletters go. I want to thank Debbie Rice for all her enthusiasm and I know loads of time spent in preparation and lay-out of newsletters long before I became involved in our society. I want to continue the tradition.

The purpose of the THJS is to collect, preserve, publish and disseminate materials having reference to the settlement, and history of Jews in Texas and their participation in its social, economic, religious, political, professional and cultural growth.

In order to accomplish our goals, I would like to request all information be mailed to me so that we can ascertain the viability for publication. We need everyone's cooperation to continue the work of our society, which by the way, is the largest in the nation. Speaking of publications, Geri Gregory of San Antonio will be my right arm in doing the graphics, lay-out and probably the one whom should get more of the credit. For her to get the newsletters out in a timely manner deadlines will have to be established so as not to have to scramble at the last minute to get it ready for our meetings. They will be noted elsewhere in this newsletter.

The executive board of our society has requested that instead of putting out four major newsletters a year, that we publish two interim letters and two major ones before our annual gatherings. The two interim letters will be news of our members and/or projects underway and anything pertinent at the time. The major newsletters will be mainly of historical content and meeting schedules.

Thank you for your time. Any suggestions will be welcome.

Texas Jewish Historical Society's 1998-1999 Officers

The Officers and By-Laws changes listed below were voted in at The Annual Gathering in San Antonio, May 1-3, 1998.

Officers - 1 Year term

President	Helen Wilk, Corpus Christi
1 st Vice-President	Jack Gerrick, Ft. Worth
2nd Vice-President	Charles Hart, Temple
3rd Vice-President	Ima Joy Gandler, Waco
Recording Secretary	Mitzi Milstein, Longview
Corresponding Secretary	Davie Lou Solka, Corpus Christi
Treasurer	Mickey Graubart, Houston
Archivist	Howard Lackman, Arlington
Historian	Blanche Sheiness, Alice
Parliamentarian	Marvin Rich, Houston

Board of Trustees - 2 Year Terms

Norma Albert, McAllen James Alexander, Dallas Glenda Alter, San Antonio Beverly Beck, Houston Florence Blum, Houston Walter Fein, San Antonio Ann Goodman, El Paso Neil Hall, Ft Worth Dorothy Harelik, Hamilton Dave Hoff, Midland

Frank Kasman, Midland Edwin Katten, Waco Patti Maltz, Austin Allen Mondell, Dallas Herman Morris, Ft. Worth Charles Nathan, Houston Ben Pfeffer, Houston Norma Skibell, Lubbock Mimi Toubin, Brenham Edward Winkler, Ft Stockton

By-Laws Changes

1. Expanding the dates of the annual meeting to anytime in the spring quarter of the year:

Past wording: Article VII (A): There shall be one (1) regular membership gathering of the Society to be held in March or April of each year.

New wording: There shall be one (1) regular membership gathering of the Society to be held in the spring of each year.

2. Increasing the minimum dues level to \$36 (first dues increase in our 19-year history)

Past wording: Article III (B) (g) Regular Member \$25. *New wording:* Regular Member \$36.

Research for PBS

Shalom,

I wonder if you can help me. I've just begun doing research for a PBS documentary (that will be nationally broadcast) on stories about southern jews, specifically Texas. The producers are an award-winning team that are on faculty at UT Austin. While the internet is a wonderful resource to locate many of the communities in the Lone Star State, I am now searching for the stories.

What we are looking for is: 1) Interesting characters who have great stories to tell; and 2) matters of specific historical importance. Nothing is too outrageous.

Along with interesting and colorful stories about Jewish life, I am looking for the following:

• still photos

- old 8mm film/home movies of bar/bat mitzvahs and weddings
- Jewish newspapers, periodicals and magazines that are not on the web

For anyone who can offer these things to the project, they will receive a copy of it upon completion, as well as appropriate acknowledgement in the credits.

I would appreciate any help you can provide.

Martha Sternberg 540 NE 7th Ave. #2 Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33301 (954) 463-9187 E-mail: Marthamedi@aol.com

Take Note!

TJHS President, Helen Wilk, has a new home telephone number. It is (512) 991-1118. You may e-mail TJHS at <tjhs@neosoft.com>.

Kariel Named Citizen of the Year

Louis Weisman Kariel, Jr. was named Marshall's 1997 Citizen of the Year by the Greater Marshall Chamber of Commerce at their 84th Annual Awards Banquet.

Kariel, who has strong roots in Marshall, was recognized for his many civic efforts.

"Many youngsters and adults know how to swim because of his work as head of the Water Safety Committee of the Harrison County Red Cross," said Tony Williams, Marshall City Manager, and as 1996 recipient of the prestigious award, made this year's presentation. Williams also cited Kariel's activity in Jaycees, the American Legion and its boys' and girls' programs and the Lion's Club.

Last year was a momentous year for Kariel, both personally and professionally. His downtown The Hub Shoe Store marked 100 years as a family-owned business and he turned 70 on his birthday. Clearly emotional and speechless, Kariel was able to muster an expression of appreciation.

"I can't believe it, but I do appreciate this very much," Kariel said. "Marshall has meant a lot to me and to our family and my dad made a speech one time. "The Lord has been good to us."

Kariel contributed to Marshall's cultural affairs by serving as president of the Marshall Symphony Society for several years. The organization built a strong membership under his leadership. He also began the father/daughter luncheon for girls who were being presented by the Marshall Symphony League.

"To give you a feel for his sense of humor, he called this event the "Symphony Pops," said Williams.

Kariel served as a member of the Planning and Zoning commission for seven years and served as a member of and chairman of the Marshall Public Library Board of Trustees.

Affectionately known as 'Marshall's First Husband,' Kariel supports the political career of his wife Mayor Audrey Kariel.

Proud of his religious heritage, Kariel has devoted much time and effort to serving on the board of Temple Moses Montefiore Congregation for 13 years, until 1973. He continues to attend religious services in Longview and has served on the temple's board in recent years. Kariel also has worked on behalf of the Marshall Hebrew Benevolent Society which restores the Jewish Cemetery. He headed up the restoration efforts that resulted in an historical marker being placed at the cemetery in 1989," Williams said.

Currently, Kariel is working as a member of Triad, a statewide organization compiled of law enforcement agencies and citizens working together to assist the elderly.

Texas Jewish Hist	orical So	ciety Annua	al Membership	
□ YES! I am enclosing my dues payment to the Texas Jewish Historical Society for the 1998-99 membership year.				
□ \$36 – Annual Member	🗆 \$50 – Suppor	rting Member	□ \$100 – Sponsor	
□ \$250 – Sustaining Member	□ \$500 – Benefactor □ \$1,000 – Patron			
Name:				
Name of Spouse: Maiden Name:				
Address:				
City:		State:	Zip:	
Home tel. #:	Fax #:	E-mail address:		
Contributions to the Texas Jewish Historical Society are tax deductible within the limits of the law. Please clip and send with your check to TJHS , P.O. Box 10193, Austin, TX 78766-0193.				

Restoration of a Jewish Cemetery in Gonzales

After years of neglect, barring a few sporadic cleanups, a group from a Spring Branch synagogue, near Houston, is breathing life into a forgotten Jewish cemetery.

In March, the group from Congregation Beth Am uncovered from weeds and debris 15 headstones and monuments of Jewish men, women and children who were buried between 1861 and 1901.

Located just outside Gonzales, about 2-1/2 hours west of Houston, the modest cemetery lies in a field on a 250-acre farm owned by John Beiler, an Amish farmer from Pennsylvania.

It was during a January trip by the congregation's senior citizens to look at historic homes and visit two established Jewish cemeteries in Gonzales when Jack Kronick was inspired to find the whereabouts of the old cemetery. When Kronick returned in February with his wife, they found the cemetery had gone to ruin.

The approximately 50-foot by 100-foot site, which is about a quarter occupied, is the final resting place of some early Jewish settlers according to the dates on the stones and records. The names on the gravestones have their own stories, as Kronick discovered.

When Jeannette Hirsch died in 1873, she was brought to the Gonzales cemetery from Corpus Christi when a son-in-law of Capt. Richard King, the founder of the King Ranch, blocked her burial because she was Jewish, according to the book *Deep in the Heart of Texas*, by Ruthe Winegarten and Cathy Schechter. Her husband, David Hirsch, carried her body 140 miles by covered wagon to her final resting place. The Beth Am group returned in May to restore the broken parts of the monument at the grave site of Jeannette Hirsch.

Congregation Beth Am is requesting donations to put up a new fence, costing \$2,000, to keep animals out. With 50 people sending in \$40 each, this could be easily accomplished. The donation checks will be cashed only when the entire amount is received.

If you can help out with this *mitzvah*, send your check to: Congregation Beth Am, 1431 Brittmoore Rd., Houston, TX 77043. Please note on the check: For Gonzales Cemetery.

Matchmaking: From the Garden of Eden to Cyberspace

Filmmakers and Society members Cynthia Salzman Mondell and Allen Mondell are beginning production on their documentary film, "Matchmaking: From the Garden of Eden to Cyberspace." And you might be able to help them find evetything from *shadchans* to home movies.

The film will explore and essential element of Jewish life – matchmaking – an institution that has been operating since Adam and Eve to preserve our Jewish heritage. From Biblical times and the paid matchmaker of the *shtetl* to the singles groups and dating services in Cyberspace, Jewish matchmakers have taken many different shapes and forms.

Through personal stories from the past to the present, they'll show how Jewish singles are finding each other and how the Jewish community is offering them support. The film is not only intended to entertain but also to raise issues and generate discussions that are critical to Jewish survivalidentity, assimilation and continuity.

They're looking for shadchans or modern day matchmakers, arranged marriages, home movies of how Jewish singles of earlier generations came together, Internet marriages, successful singles programs like Profiles in Dallas, the names of Yiddish films or American films which featured a matchmaker, music or art which includes themes of matchmaking, and any organizations or institutions which bring single Jews together.

If you don't have any suggestions, maybe you know someone who can help them - a rabbi, a teacher/ professor, a well-informed community person. The subject matter of the film is not restricted to Texas.

The Mondells can be reached at Media Projects, 5215 Homer Street, Dallas, TX 75206; phone number (214) 826-3863; fax number (214) 826-3919, or e-mail: cynfilm@aol.com.

Ideally, the film will air on television, but they cannot guarantee that at this time. They can guarantee that their production and distribution company Media Projects will distribute the film to organizations and institutions worldwide. Their film "West of Hester Street" was completed in 1983. Since then, it has traveled the world, showing in theaters, airing nationwide on PBS and in Europe, Israel and South Africa.

Partial funding for "Matchmaking: From the Garden of Eden to Cyberspace" came from the Texas Jewish Historical Society and foundations primarily located in Texas.



Request from Jewish War Veterans

We have had a request from the Jewish War Veterans of the State of Texas asking for anyone in the Texas Jewish Historical Society (men or women) who has served in any branch of the Armed Services, Reserves or National Guard in any war, and is not already a member of a post, to please contact the State Commander.

Many Veterans living in small Texas towns do not have the accessibility of a post nearby. The state is forming an associate membership-atlarge. Jewish war veterans was formed in 1896, now 102 years old, and is the oldest veterans' organization in the United States. For information, contact Herbert Berkowitz, State Commander.

> 5824 Ridgerock Court Fort Worth, TX 76132 Phone: (817)-346-8337 E-Mail : fberk@aol.com Fax: (817)-346-6276

With Deep Sympathy

It is with great sorrow and sympathy that we must report that Ellen Bari Brachman (1946-1998) was killed in an Automible accident in Haiti on May 21st.

Ellen was the daughter of Leon and Faye Brachman of Fort Worth. Faye is a past president of TJHS.

I'm Sure Leon and Faye would like to hear from members in a show of support.

Bob and Gerry Beer Honored in Dallas

Dallas community leaders Bob and Gerry Beer were recently honored by the Dallas Jewish Historical Society for their 45 years of community service. Well known in Dallas, the Beers are longtime members of Temple Emanu-El and have received many honors from professional, civic and Jewish organizations.

Bob is a past president of the Dallas Jewish Historical Society, in addition a long time board member of the TJHS, and has been an active volunteer with the Dallas Jewish Community Relations Council, B'nai B'rith, the Jewish Federation and the American Jewish Congress which he served as President, Treasurer and as a National Board member. Equally committed to serving her fellow man and community, Gerry has worked in child care efforts throughout Dallas and served on the boards of Jewish Family Service and the Dualists Jewish Coalition for the Homeless. She is a cofounder of both Rhoads Terrace Pre-School and the Family Place: Jewish Federation Women's Division Chair: and American Jewish Congress, Board Member as well as holding membership in many other civic and charitable organizations.

Both Gerry and Bob are recipients of the American Jewish Congress "Touch of Conscience" Award.

Share the Pleasure of Historical Texas Synagogues with Someone Special!

Send Historical Texas Synagogues note cards when corresponding with friends or relatives. Each pack contains color prints, two each of five different synagogues - 10 cards and 10 envelopes.

Package A contains:

Temple Beth-El, Corsicana Temple Mizpah, Abilene Temple Freda, Bryan Temple Beth Israel, San Angelo Schwarz Family Synagogue, Hempstead

Package B contains:

must be included with order.

B'nai Israel, Galveston Temple Emanuel, Beaumont B'nai Abraham Synagogue, Brenham Sinai Hebrew Congregation, Jefferson B'nai Israel, Victoria



Only \$10.00 per pack! Each pack of note-cards

is cellophane wrapped. Give them to friends and family! It is a great gift at a great price! © 1998 Texas Jewish Historical Society

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Make check or money order payable to: The Texas Jewish Histori- cal Society and send with form to: c/o Charles B. Hart 2509 Redwing Drive Temple, TX 76502 Allow 4-6 weeks for delivery. Retail shops receive a 40% discount with a minimum order of any 10 packs. A Texas Resale Certificate

This & That...

Next Board Meeting August 2 (Sunday) Houston Hobby Airport at Hilton Inn 100:00 PM to 3:00PM. Call Beverly Beck at (713)-667-4065 for reservations.

Fall Board Meeting October 30, 31 and Nov 1st Stagecoach Inn Salado, TX - More to follow.

Winter Board Meeting - to be announced - Suggestions welcome.

Walter Fein of San Antonio Selected as Docent of the Year at the Institute of Texan Cultures - Well done !!

Phyllis Hirsch of Fort Worth has been appointed as new membership Chairman for Coming Year.

Marvin Leshin of Corpus Christi has been appointed a new Board Member by President Helen Wilk.

Next Spring Annual Gathering (20th year to be held in Fort Worth with exact dates to be announced.)

TJHS Member **Dr. Nathan CeDara** of Stephenville was presented the 1998 Governor's Volunteer Award by Governor George Bush for his founding of H.O.P.E., Inc. Medical Clinic. This clinic provides health care to the needy.

In Memoriam

Our sympathy to the family of **Ethel Slipakoff** of Houston (formerly of Brenham).

The deadline for the winter issue of the newsletter is **December 1, 1998.** All articles should be sent to Jack Gerrick, 4308 Sarita Dr., Ft. Worth, TX 76109, or faxed to him at (817) 924-5595.

Welcome New Members!

January, 1998 through June, 1998

Rabbi Richard and Arlene Dryer, San Antonio Clayton & Carolyn Epstein, San Antonio Betty Jean Farb, McAllen Drs. Barbara Schachtel and Louis H. Green, Houston Lenore Karp, San Antonio Bruce and Bveverly (Pactor) Laves, Dallas Thelma (Stone) Ledger, San Antonio Joe and Barbara (York) McClellan, Pharr Robert Pone, Grapevine Lillian Racvusin, Corpus Christi Robert and Miriam Racusin, Corpus Christi Shirley Tahl Raghusa, San Antonio Jackie (Hyman) Rosenwasser, Wilmette, IL Jeanne and Joe Samuel/ Jewish Herald Voice, Houston Louis Sokol, Houston Steven and Rochelle (Gould) Sternblitz, Arlington Brian and Barbara Thum, Houston Jimmy L. and Doris (Miller) Toubin, San Antonio Lloyd and Evelyn Ray (Stool) Wasldron, The Woodlands



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